

JUDAISM DEFENDED

AGAINST THE

ATTACKS OF T. J. C. OF OXFORD.

A REPLY

TO TWO LETTERS ON

THE DAMASCUS QUESTION,

IN

"THE TIMES" NEWSPAPER OF THE
20TH AND 27TH OCTOBER, 1840.

BY

J. L. S. in theat
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TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES," &c.

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JUDAISM DEFENDED,

&c., &c.

TO T. J. C.

SIR,

In "The Times" newspaper of the 20th and 27th of last month you have published two letters* containing charges against the Jews as odious as they are unfounded, and which, if not refuted on strictly Jewish grounds, may be productive of great evil, as they are calculated to mislead and envenom public opinion, and to revive antiquated and fatal prejudices, which humanity repudiates, and reason gladly consigns to oblivion. I can fully appreciate the motives which prevent our learned Rabbis from entering into a newspaper contest with a nameless assailant; but as it is necessary that the public should be disabused, and that the want of truth in your statements, and the gross fallacy of your inferences, should be exposed, I do not hesitate to undertake that duty, in the humble hope that He, whose gracious aid enabled the stripling David to overcome the giant Philistine, will also help me to deal with the Oxonian Goliath, "who hath reviled the hosts (and witnesses) of the living God."

You open your attack by finding fault with Sir Moses Montefiore and M. Crémieux, in their important mission to the East. You blame them for having liberated the unfortunate victims of fanaticism at Damascus; you blame them for having left Alexandria; you blame them for not having gone on to Damascus; you speak of the dangers to which they were exposed as imaginary; insinuate that they dreaded the result of further inquiry, and broadly assert that their mission is virtually at an end.

This portion of your letter might safely have been left to the dignified and veracious reply of Mr. H. de Castro, President of the London Committee of Deputies of British Jews,† were it not that, with a degree of adroitness which can hardly be equalled, and certainly not surpassed even by the master-spirit who "could make the worse appear the better reason," you have, by bold assertions, by shifting your ground, and by garbling the extract from Sir Moses' last letter, contrived to pervert the truth, and to render necessary a further reply. But as facts and dates are stubborn things, all your adroitness will prove of no avail against a short recapitulation of events as they did occur.

On the 7th of July last Sir Moses left London for Alexandria, under the safeguard of British protection. On the 15th of July the Quintuple Treaty was signed, so that very few days after the arrival of Sir Moses at Alexandria, Mehemet Ali was placed at variance with Great Britain and her allies. The whole influence of France was exerted to counteract the efforts the Jewish deputation made to obtain a new trial. (Vide "The Times" of August and September.) For M. Thiers was become the pro-

* Vide Appendix.

† Vide "The Times" of 22d October.

tector of Count de Ratti Menton, French consul at Damascus, and sought to avoid the disgrace which an inquiry into his lawless and barbarous conduct must entail not only on that functionary, but on the Government likewise, whose representative he continues to be. Events, over which the Jewish deputies could have no possible control, established the preponderance of French influence at Alexandria, while Great Britain embarked in active hostilities against the rebel Pasha. Every praise is therefore due to the perseverance and skill of Sir Moses and his colleague, who, under circumstances the most discouraging, and in the face of an all-powerful opposition, secured important advantages without any dereliction of principle. They consented to the liberation of the prisoners, because it would have been unjust and cruel to leave these innocent men in a dungeon, exposed to the tender mercies of rapacity and fanaticism, especially as their prolonged incarceration would not aid the inquiry which the Jewish deputies reserved the right of instituting. Sir Moses Montefiore* positively declares that the liberation of the prisoners was granted as a matter of right, he and M. Crémieux having refused to accept it as a boon. You, Sir, prefer the authority of a mere newspaper report, which asserts that such liberation was granted as an act of grace. But the citizens of London, who know from experience the implicit reliance due to Sir Moses' word; the people of England, who do justice to his many estimable qualities; the civilized world, which admires his public spirit and devotedness, will not hesitate to accord confidence where most it is deserved.

Sir Moses left Alexandria because the altered state of relations between England and Egypt did not permit him, a loyal Briton, having a public character to support, to abide with his country's open foe. He did not go on to Damascus, because the Pasha declared himself unable to ensure the personal safety of the Jewish deputies. Mehemet Ali is a bold man; his firm resistance to five of the greatest powers of Europe, proves it. He is jealous of his authority, and anxious to appear in the eyes of Europeans, more powerful and firm in his government than he really is. The dangers therefore which he confesses his inability to guard against and to overcome, must have been far other than imaginary. They must have been not only real but imminent, and of alarming magnitude. And you, Sir, who in your snug retreat at Oxford profess to be better able to appreciate the extent of these dangers than Sir Moses, who is on the spot, or than Mehemet Ali himself, you would appear truly ridiculous in the eyes of every "sane man," were it not that the extreme malignity of your insinuation provokes a feeling more akin to detestation than to ridicule. If ever man deserved the gratitude of a suffering people, and the approbation of the good and wise of every creed, it is Sir Moses Montefiore, who renounces the comforts and elegancies of his home, the endearing society of relatives and friends, and all the enjoyments which wealth, rank, and consideration can bestow, in order, amongst semi-barbarians, and at great personal risk, to plead the cause of the oppressed, and to vindicate the purity of those religious rites which have been transmitted to him from his fathers. But what does he deserve who wantonly and unjustly traduces so worthy a man by perverting his motives and misrepresenting his actions?

* Vide "The Times" of 11th October.

In the course of your first letter, you repeatedly assert—"All communications from Syria, recently published, unanimously concur in considering the guilt of the Jews as fully proven." In your second letter you find it needful to shift your ground. You drop the decisive words *all* and *unanimously*. You admit that opinions as to the guilt of the accused are conflicting, but adopt the view of those who ground their condemnation of the Jews on the "minute and accurate manner in which the separate confessions of the accused agree and corroborate each other." Surely you must have read the statement made on the spot by Mr. T. W. Pieritz, not a Jew, but a convert to Christianity, a member of the Church of England, and Assistant Missionary at Jerusalem. Surely you have in that statement seen how this minute agreement was obtained: how Mahomed Telli, the agent and coadjutor of Count de Ratti Menton, was for hours locked up with the prisoners in their cells: how he tutored them; and how, notwithstanding his instructions, they had to be tortured again and again, before such answers could be obtained from each of them as perfectly corresponded with the general confession framed by Mahomed Telli, the presiding fiend, whose valuable aid, although he was a man of notoriously infamous character, the noble Count secured by paying his debts and releasing him from prison. (Vide Statement, page 2). These facts were published to the world by Mr. Pieritz, who cannot be suspected of undue attachment to a religious system or a people that he had quitted. But what are we to think of you, who, knowing all these circumstances, presume to declare "that all letters from Syria unanimously concur in considering the guilt of the Jews as fully proven," and to make the fact of such proof, the basis of an atrocious accusation against the Jews of England: who subsequently are forced to admit, that so far from unanimous concurrence, opinions as to the guilt of the Jews are conflicting; and whose only proofs eventually turn out to be, confessions extorted by torture, and which cannot do otherwise than agree in every minute particular, because they were all framed and dictated by one man. Such are the proofs which you, Sir, palm on the public as full and conclusive; and yet you boast of your love of truth!

You state that your sole motive for addressing "The Times," and reviving the accusation against the Jews, was "because the investigation so loudly called for, so anxiously expected, had been abandoned;" and in both your letters, you again and again repeat—"The mission of Sir Moses Montefiore and M. Crémieux is virtually at an end." But nothing can be more untrue than this assertion; nothing can be more uncandid than the manner in which you mutilate and distort the extract from Sir Moses' last letter, as given by Mr. de Castro. Sir Moses, announcing his intention of proceeding to Constantinople, states—"One object I have in view, is to thank the Sultan for what he has done in Rhodes; another, to seek his favor and protection to our brethren in Syria, when he gets possession; and a third, *to go to Damascus*, should Syria be speedily evacuated; but at present there seems no hope of that being accomplished. If I find there is none when I arrive at Constantinople, I shall then accomplish the other two if possible, and make such arrangements as will, at some future period, facilitate an inquiry which I still think it needful to make."

It is by tearing the last sentence from its context, that you manage to give your own construction to the words "some future period" and "still," which you aver are vague and lukewarm. This imputation, however, cannot for an instant be sustained, when these words are viewed in their proper connection with the rest of the letter. Sir Moses declares

his intention is to proceed to Damascus, should he be able speedily to do so; but if he cannot go thither at present, he must leave it for some future period; in the interim, he will make the best use of his time to facilitate an inquiry which, notwithstanding the release and reintegration of the accused Jews, he still thinks it needful to make. This declaration is not vague or lukewarm, but positive and straightforward. Sir Moses knows that neither the Jews, as a body, nor their religion, can have any possible cause to dread inquiry, but that every Jew is sincerely desirous that the dark mystery which shrouds this horrid affair should be fully cleared up. Then, and not till then, will it be known whether Padre Thomaso was murdered, and by whom; whether, indeed, he is dead. For notwithstanding your daring assertion—"that the guilt of the Jews is fully proven"—it is a fact, that beyond the disappearance of the priest and his servant, there is not the shadow of a shade of proof that any crime has been committed on them. According to Mr. Pieritz' statement, a Jew, Yitskhak Yavoh, came forward, and swore that he had seen the Padre and his servant at a certain spot, about half an hour's walk from the Jewish quarter, on the road to Palakhia, near sun-set of the day on which they disappeared. He was, consequently, the last person who had seen them, and his evidence most important; but the persecutors felt that his statement might interfere with their plans, and they took care effectually to silence him. Although in nowise implicated in the accusation, and a voluntary witness, he is tortured, gets upwards of 5000 lashes, and is flogged to death! (Statement, p. 4.) Nor is this all. A certain native Christian, Seyd Navu, forcibly took away a sack of flour from a poor Jew. The offender is put in prison; but the next day he is liberated, without trial and without restitution. "It is confidently stated that while the man was yet in prison, both his mother and his wife ran up and down the Christian street, calling out—'If Seyd Navu be touched, or if you do not interest yourselves in his immediate liberation, we shall bring misfortune upon you all; we shall discover the whole plot, and shew where PADRE THOMASO is.' And the French Consul, on hearing this, went to the Pasha, and demanded the liberation of Seyd Navu; the women never being questioned what they meant by their threats" (Statement, p. 12).

All these facts are known to Sir Moses Montefiore. He also knows, from the history of the persecutions the Jews have suffered, that instances have occurred of Jews having been tortured and put to death, as the alleged murderers of persons who for a time were missing, but subsequently made their appearance uninjured.* And yet you assert that Sir Moses "has got rid of the inquiry in the East, because he dreads the result for his brethren"! Does the result of the investigation at Rhodes, in which the Jews were triumphantly acquitted, as they must be wherever an inquiry is afforded to them, warrant your assertion? No! You, and all the calumniators of our nation, may rest assured—the guilty actors, and still more guilty projectors, of this horrid tragedy, may rest assured—that as soon as it is any ways possible the inquiry will be undertaken and proceeded in. This assurance is rendered doubly sure by the latest intelligence from Constantinople, in the *Times* of Thursday, 29th October, which states that it is the positive intention of Sir Moses to go to Damascus as soon as it is possible to do so with safety to himself; and *God defend the right*, is the sincere prayer of every Jew on this occasion.

* Jost. *Israelite Annals*, vol. ii. p. 208 and 209.

I have dwelt at some length on the state of things in the east, because that forms the basis of your unjustifiable attack on the Jews of the west. You assert that Padre Thomaso has been murdered; that the Jews, by their concurrent confessions, are proved to be the assassins from religious motives; and that, as the Religion and observances of the Rabbinical Jews are the same in every part of the world, the Jews of Europe—of England—cannot be deemed innocent, if those of Damascus were found guilty. I have shewn, I trust, to the satisfaction of my readers, that the Jews of Damascus are not proved to be guilty, because the minute and exact agreement in their confessions, on which alone your assertion is grounded, has been extorted by torture, under the dictation of one man, and after repeated tutoring from him. I have further shewn that they could not be proved guilty, because the crime of which they are accused, may not at all have been committed; as there is no proof that the Padre has been murdered, or even that he is dead. And as law, and reason combine in requiring that before any person can be convicted, the *Corpus delicti*, or fact, that a crime has actually been committed, must be placed beyond doubt, which in the Damascus case has not yet been done; and as, moreover, inquiry—where fair and impartial inquiry has been afforded to the Jews as at Rhodes—has completely established their innocence and the atrocity of their accusers, I might dismiss the subject, and close my letter with the converse of your proposition: viz. As the Jews of the East, are found to be innocent, those of the West cannot be deemed guilty. But, Sir, you compel me still further to follow and refute you. Not content with reviving the old and absurd charge that we are blood-stained fanatics, you dare assert, that our Laws sanction perjury, and blink at murder; and this you do with a degree of plausibility, and an affectation of candour, which can only be surpassed by the reckless violation of all truth in your statements, and the malignant sophistry of your reasoning and inferences. I cannot help feeling both pity and regret, that a man gifted with great talents, as you evidently are, should so nefariously abuse his powers; that one who professes to be a Christian, should exert himself to banish peace from earth, and good will from among men.

After stating that the only defence the Jews of England had offered to the accusation brought against them and their religion was: firstly, an official declaration, in which the Rev. Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hirschel, on his solemn oath, denied that the Jews in any of their Religious Rites used human blood; and secondly, various anonymous letters, the writers of which all dwell on the command given by Moses to abstain from blood: after stating this, you endeavour to shew that neither the one nor the other kind of defence is valid and satisfactory. As regards Dr. Hirschel's oath, you say that the Jews in their Synagogue service on the Day of Atonement, recite a prayer or formula called *Col Needra*, which solemnly annuls and cancels all Oaths, Vows, and Asseverations the Jew takes during the whole year to come: and you ask, "In what sense do the Jews understand this formula? and for what purpose is it introduced in the service of so solemn a festival as the day of Atonement? Until these questions are answered in a clear and satisfactory manner," you go on to say, "the Oath of a Jew is utterly worthless." In order properly to answer these questions, and to refute at all points your scandalous assertion, it becomes necessary I should call the attention of the public to the Scriptural and Rabbinical doctrine of oaths, and vows.

The sacred scriptures speak of two distinct kinds of Asseveration. The one is offered from man to man, and regulates their respective rights, in-

terests, and obligations towards each other and society. It is called שְׁבוּעָה "the Oath of the Lord" (Exod. xxii. 11) according to the precept, "In his name shalt thou swear" (Deut. xi. 20), and is sanctified by the great command, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exod. xx. 7. Deut. v. 11). The second kind of Asseveration is offered by man to God, and consists of the obligation to perform, or abstain from something, and is contracted towards the Supreme Being. It is called נֶדֶר "Vow" (Num. xx. 2) and is sanctified by the command, "That which is gone out of thy mouth, thou shalt keep and perform" (Deut. xxiii. 23).

The "Oath of the Lord" cannot possibly be held more sacred, or invested with greater weight and importance, than is done by the Rabbinical Code. In all criminal and civil matters, in all contracts and contestations, whether administered by a Court of Justice, or taken in private, an Oath is sacred. Not only does the Rabbinical Law allow the Oath of Expiation—the strongest proof which the law can give of the confidence it places in man's conscience and religious feeling, and which, from the want of that confidence, modern systems of jurisprudence are forced to discard—but all Rabbinical legislation rests on proof upon Oath, and its inviolable sanctity. This is fully proved by the whole *Seder Nezekin*: *Baba Kama*, *Mezi'ah*, and *Bathra*, *Sanhedrin*, *Shebu'oth*, and in short every portion of the Talmud which treats of the rights of persons and things. To suppose that the Rabbis, who ground their whole administration of justice on the sacred obligation of Oaths, and the awful responsibility thereto attached; to suppose that these Rabbis placed it in the power of any man, or of all men, to violate social order, to trample on the laws, and to carry confusion and ruin into the bosom of every family: that they held out "an unrestricted license to commit perjury;" and that they did this in their public worship on the most solemn of their festivals: to suppose this, is to assume that these acute Legislators stultified their whole system of law and justice, and were worse than madmen! But such is not the case; nor has an instance ever occurred, that one Jew refused faith to the Oath of another Jew, because the *Col Needra* lessens the sanctity, obligation and responsibility of an Oath: for the great Canon of the Oral Law, the Talmud, declares: "A transgression man is guilty of towards his God, the day of Atonement will expiate; but a transgression of which man is guilty towards his fellow-man, the day of atonement cannot expiate, unless the Offender has appeased (satisfied) him he offended" (*Mishna Tr. Yomah*, chap. viii. 9. *Talmud*, fo. 85, ב). And that no possible doubt may remain on the subject, it is further declared: "An Oath between man and man—or in which the interests of society are concerned—can never be revoked or set aside except with the consent of him to whom, or in whose favor, it has been taken" (*Talmud*, *Tr. Nedarim*, fo. 23, ב. *Tossaph.**)

That this precept is strictly adhered to in practice, cannot be better evidenced than by the conduct of the Jews towards the fallen Darius and the victorious Alexander, as related by Josephus, *Ant. lib. xii.* When the mighty victor, at the head of a powerful army, was in the vicinity of Jerusalem, besieging Tyre, the Jews refused to obey his requisitions, because they had taken the oath of allegiance to the vanquished king of Persia, and their laws forbade them to violate that oath.

Having thus shewn that the *Col Needra* by no means interferes with the

* See also the Comments of R. Asher, in *Loco*, and Maimonides, *Hilchot Teshubah* ii.

sacred obligation of an oath, in any case between man and man, I now proceed to answer your questions, to explain the sense in which that formula is understood by Jews, and to state the reason why it opens the Synagogue Service for the Day of Atonement. The Israelite considers that day as the most solemn of the whole year. His Scriptures tell him "On that day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins before the Lord shall you be made clean," Levit. xvi. 30. Since the destruction of his temple and the cessation of sacrifices appointed for that day, the affliction of his soul, the confession of his sins, sincere penitence and contrite prayer are all that remain to the Jew, together with a firm reliance on the mercy of his God. But before he presumes to approach the Supreme Judge of the universe, before he opens his lips to implore grace and pardon, the Jew has a duty to perform to his own conscience. He may offer many a vow in moments of need and peril which in happier hours he neglects to perform. He may pledge himself to do many a good deed, to abstain from many a sinful one, and break his pledge. He may, in a hasty moment, under the influence of passion and strong excitement, swear to do that which it is out of his power or improper to carry into effect. His law declares: "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth" Numb. xxx. 2. A sacred writer advises him "that it is better he should not vow than that he should vow and not perform," Eccles. v. 5. The Jew adopts that advice; and before he enters on his orisons, he annuls all vows and obligations he may rashly make during the coming year: and he does this prospectively and before any vow is uttered, as after the vow has been made, it is no longer in his own power to cancel or recall it.

Thus, then, it is evident that the *Col Needra*, instead of being, as you assert, an evidence of the slight regard in which the Jew holds his oath, is in reality the strongest proof of the profound sense he entertains of the obligation and sanctity of his plighted word: since he presumes not even to pray for pardon of his sins, before he has guarded himself against the possible violation of a thoughtless and improper vow. That such is the true meaning of the *Col Needra*, and such the purpose for which it is introduced, is proved not only from the passages of the Talmud already cited, but also from the *Teshubot Haribash*, and R. Hai Gaon, and R. Meir Rothenburg therein quoted; from the *Shulchan Aruch*, R. David Abudarham in the *Tur Orach Chayim*, and R. Saadiah Gaon therein quoted, and from R. Joseph Karo in the *Beth Joseph*; in short, from a host of Rabbinical authorities who wrote on the subject. Such is likewise the substance of the explanation, which in reply to your first letter, was offered in few words, by a respected Hebrew gentleman, Dr. Van Oven.* You rejected his explanation and asserted that "there is no book of authority among the Jews which adopts it." I have quoted several, the writers of which lived at different periods, from the 4th to the 16th century of the Christian era. In your second letter you exclaim—"Where is the Gentile acquainted with all the observances of the Jews and every book that may contain a portion thereof?" It is very evident, you yourself are not the highly gifted Gentile who possesses that acquaintance.

* Vide Times, 21st October.

You aver that some of the minor states of Germany have caused the *Col Needra* to be expunged from the Synagogue Service. Should this be true, it is but one instance of the meddling, mischievous mania of interfering with, and legislating about, any thing and every thing, for which some of these petty princes and their Lilliputian parliaments are so notorious. But certain it is, that the more powerful and enlightened governments of Germany, as Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, &c. have not deemed it proper or necessary to interfere with their Jewish subjects, and the prayers which their consciences dictate; and that, although the Synagogue Service, like all the books of the Jews, has long been accessible and known to non-Israelites, although the *Col Needra* has been before the world many centuries, no court of justice, even in countries least favorable to our nation, has considered that formula as any ground for refusing credence to the oath of a Jew; and the most learned antagonists of the Jews, as Eisenmenger and Chiarin, however much inclined to find fault with the Rabbis and their doctrines, have never presumed to assert that they did not respect the sanctity of an oath. I do not thank you for your concession when you admit, that "doubtless, Jews possess honour and conscience as well as others;" and when you dare to assert "that Rabbinism fosters neither honour nor conscience," I can only pity the writer who is capable of applying such expressions to a system of faith, which is founded on the revealed will of God, and has stood the test of 25 centuries:—a faith which good men adhere to in life and death, and wise men have sealed with their hearts' blood!

After these remarks, I trust every man gifted with common sense will grant, that nothing which you have stated can in any, the slightest, degree lessen the confidence and respect due to the oath of a Jew.

You next attack the line of defence adopted in various anonymous letters, written by Jews who all dwell on the command given by Moses to abstain from blood: whereas you endeavour to shew from Rabbinical Law, that "if the use of blood in any religious rite is indispensable," that would supersede the command to abstain from blood. This part of your Letter is the one which least requires reply; for you have yet to show that there is any one religious rite practised by Jews, in which the use of blood is indispensable, or at all required. Doctor Hirschel swears there is no such rite; and after all that has been said against and for the validity of the oath of a Jew, I am certain there lives not a man so devoid of common sense and feeling as to balance between the oath of that eminent and venerable divine and your "if." Therefore, and until you have proved the reality of your hypothesis, any answer to your tirade on this subject, would be an unpardonable waste of time, and is utterly uncalled for.

I now come to the pith and marrow of your Letter, namely, that part thereof in which you endeavor to show that the customs, laws, and history of the Jews, render it probable that they may, from religious motives, commit murder. After mentioning the assassination of Padre Thomaso, as the established fact, which renders the existence of such motives possible, you call on the Jews for their replies to Seven Questions. These questions I shall transcribe, examine, and answer *seriatim*; as it is needless I should say any thing further respecting Padre Thomaso, with whose death or disappearance, the Jews, according to all evidence hitherto offered, are concerned only inasmuch as it has been to them a source of cruel and unmerited suffering.

Question 1. "Is the word *Goi* and its plural form *Goyim* applied by

Jews to all Gentiles, whether Christians, Mahometans, or of any other creed?"

Answer. *Goi* is the Hebrew word for nation or people. In the Sacred Scriptures it is indiscriminately applied to Israelites as well as to Gentiles: as in Exodus xix. 6, גוי קדוש "an holy nation;" again, "this nation is thy people," (Exod. xxxiii. 13.) "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation," (Deut. iv. 34); and in many other passages in which the word *Goi* is applied to Israel. The phrase, "an holy *Goi*," above quoted, proves that it is not a term of reproach or vituperation. According to the usage of later times, it is applied to the nations of earth other than Israelites. *Goyim* is its plural form.

Question 2. "Do the Jews, in their passover service, make use of the following expressions: 'O pour out thy wrath upon the *Goyim* who know thee not, and upon the kingdoms who invoke not thy name: for they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and cause thy fierce anger to overtake them, pursue them in wrath and destroy them from under the heavens of my Lord'?"

Answer. This entire passage, which does form a part of the Passover Service, is taken from the Sacred Scriptures, (viz. Psalm lxxix. 6, 7; lxxix. 24; and Lamentations iii. 66), without any addition whatever. If you are a Christian, you believe with us, that the writers in the Old Testament were divinely inspired, that the spirit of holiness rested on Asaph and David, and that Jeremiah was a true Prophet of the Lord. If you are a member of the Church of England, you will find that these expressions, which you consider as proofs of hatred on the part of the Jews, retain their place in its book of Common Prayer. If you are either the one or the other, you ought to feel how unbecoming it is that you should censure the words of holy writ, or blame the Jews for using in their prayers the language dictated by the Spirit of God. But if you are not a Christian, it is needless I should defend these words against you.

In your second letter you contradict Dr. Van Oven, who stated that the word *Goyim*, here applies only to heathens: whereas you insist that it also includes Christians and Mahometans. The authorized English version does render "*Goyim*" in this passage (Psalm lxxix. 6.) by "heathen," which rendering is also retained in the book of Common Prayer. With every respect for your knowledge of Hebrew, I think the translators of the Bible knew that language fully as well as you do; but as it is possible you may be of a different opinion, "perhaps you will have the goodness" to inform me, who it was that Asaph, the author of the lxxix Psalm, meant when he used the word *Goyim*? Did he, in the spirit of prophecy, apply that word, and the entire passage, to Christians and Mahometans? The fact is, that these verses will bear no other interpretation, or application than what is warranted by the words themselves. They contain strong denunciations against the nations and kingdoms who, not knowing God, or invoking his name, have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling. Who those nations and kingdoms were, sacred and profane history alike testify. Neither you nor the Jews are authorized to apply these verses to any other nations and kingdoms; nor is there any proof that we do apply them to any others.

The assertion "that the Jews hate the Christians and curse them in their prayers," which forms the first link in your chain of deductions, rests altogether on this extract from the Passover Service. You therefore feel that some proof, of greater weight than your own unsupported

dictum, should be opposed to Dr. Van Oven's explanation, backed, as that explanation is, by Bible and Prayer Book. Accordingly, you take upon yourself to quote Maimonides, who, as you aver, mentions "Christians and Mahometans by name among those 'who have no portion in the blessings of a future state,' because they know not God." Impartial and unprejudiced men will probably feel surprised, when I assure them that Maimonides does nothing of the kind. To remove that surprise, I will transcribe the entire passage of that author to which you allude, and the Talmudic Rule on which that passage is founded; and then leave it to every unbiased mind to judge between us.

Maimonides (Hilk. Teshubah iii.8.) lays down the general rule:—"Every Israelite has a portion in the world to come."—"And the pious among the Gentile nations have likewise a portion in the world to come." He then goes on to state the exceptions to this general rule:—"But the following are those who have no portion in the world to come, but are cut off, perish, and are condemned everlastingly, for their great wickedness and sins, namely, heretics, epicureans (atheists), and deniers (renegades) of the law, &c."

He then proceeds to explain what constitutes a heretic and an epicurean, and continues—"There are three classes of deniers of the law: he who says the law is not from God. Even as to one verse or a single word, he who says Moses pronounced it by his own authority, is a denier of the Law. Likewise he who rejects the expositions, namely, the oral law, and denies its Hagadoth, like Zadok and Baithos. Lastly, he who says that the Creator, blessed be He! supersedes these commandments by other commandments; and that this law is already abrogated, although it did proceed from God, like the Notzrim and Hagarim (Christians and Mahometans). Every one of these three classes is a denier of the law."

You, Sir, wish to make it appear that the words, "like the Notzrim and Hagarim," refer to the opening of the paragraph—"the following are those who have no portion in the world to come." But as Maimonides, throughout the whole of the *Yad Chazakah*, is guided by, and in strict accordance with, the precepts of the Talmud; and as the Talmud, in *Chulin*, says that Jews only can be designated as heretics or renegades, because there are no heretics or renegades among the Gentile nations: it follows that Maimonides could not and did not apply the punishment he denounces against renegades either to Christians or Mahometans; because among them, as among all other Gentile nations, the Talmud declares "there are no renegades." That, consequently, he only speaks of the Jew, who, holding the opinion that the law of Moses is either wholly or in part abrogated, like the Christians and Mahometans do, is considered as an heretic, and denounced as such.

From what I have now stated, it becomes evident that you make Maimonides say what he never uttered, and what his text does not warrant. This may possibly be owing to your having no knowledge of the Talmud, or of the great rule laid down in *Chulin*; if so, what becomes of the "intimate acquaintance with the writings of the Cabbalists and Rabbins," of which you boast? But if you are acquainted with the rule in *Chulin*, and nevertheless wilfully misquote Rabbinical writers, and pervert their sentiments, what are we to think of that "love of truth" which you put forward as your sole motive!

Question 3. Do the Jews acknowledge the authority of the oral or Rabbinical law?

Answer. The Jews do acknowledge the authority of the oral law; though in part it is not acted upon. Its ritual enactments are every where in force; so, to a great extent, is likewise its marital code. Its criminal jurisdiction is altogether in abeyance; and in civil matters it is not often appealed to, because the Rabbis hold, that the law of the land, wherever Jews reside, is valid and binding on them in all matters other than religious.

Question 4. "Does that Law (Maimonides, *Hilkot Retzeach* v. 3) absolve a Jew who murders a *Goi*, even though that *Goi* be a proselyte of the gate and consequently no idolater, from the punishment of death?"

Answer. Decidedly not: the oral law never contemplated so flagrant a violation of the Ten Commandments, and no where authorizes it. To prove that what I say is true, I will transcribe and literally translate the passage in Maimonides which you quote in your question: "An Israelite *Sheharag Bishgagah* who has slain *unintentionally* a bondman or a sojourning stranger is to be exiled," i. e. fly to one of the Cities of Refuge. This is the passage which you quote, which you falsify by leaving out the all-important word *Bishgagah*, "*unintentionally*." The phrase *Harag Bishgagah*, is the precise term which Moses uses when he speaks of the involuntary homicide, who is to find an asylum in the cities of refuge. Numb. xxxv. 11. The English authorized version, not only on that occasion, but on many others, renders the word *Bishgagah* "at unawares" or "through ignorance" Levit. iv. 1, xiii. 22. Numb. xv. 24—26. No Hebraist, no person that has any knowledge of Hebrew, would render *Harag Bishgagah* by murder. The English law calls it "manslaughter," which, in obedience to the revealed will of God, is not punished with death. Whereas you, sir, who translate this Hebrew expression by "murder," have wilfully falsified the text, in order to render that falsification the basis of an odious charge against the Rabbinical Code, which, however, at once disappears before the true wording of the text.

Question 5. "Does the Law of Moses say: 'It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul'?"

Answer. Yes it does; but you must remember that Moses speaks of the blood of animals offered on the altar,* which invariably were "of the flock and of the herd," and of no other kind.† Moses never commands a human sacrifice, but strongly forbids it. Levit. xviii. 21, xix. 2—5. Throughout the whole of the sacred scriptures, such sacrifices, the unholy and abominable rites of the idolatrous heathen, are spoken of in the strongest terms of disgust and detestation. 2 Kings iii. 27, xvi. 3. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. Amos ii. 1. No Rabbinical work contains the slightest indication of an approach to so horrid and sacrilegious an idea, as that the pardon of any sin can be obtained by committing the greatest crime of which man can become guilty.

Question 6 "Do the Jews, in their passover service, use the words *Dazac, Adash, Baakab*?"

Answer. Yes, these words are there used. Before the Art of Printing was invented, Manuscript Copies of the Passover Service were dear and scarce, so that many were obliged to recite that service from memory. To assist them, and as a mnemonic sign, R. Judah formed these three words

* Levit. xvii. 11.

† Levit. i. 2.

from the initial letters of the ten plagues brought upon Egypt. *Dazac* from *Dam*, *Zephardea*, *Kinim*, Blood, Frogs, Lice : *Adash* from *Arab*, *Deber*, *Shekin*, Noxious Reptiles, Murrain, Blotches. And *Baakab*, from *Barad*, *Arbeh*, *Choshech*, *Bechoroth*, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, First-born. This is the only meaning of these three words.

Question 7. Is it true that at a discussion held before the diet of Poland at Sandomir, in the middle of last century, between Rabbinical Jews and Frankists (a sect of dissenting Jews since suppressed and extinct), these last mentioned, proved that the word *dazac* is formed by the initial letters of three Hebrew words *dam zaraknu coolanu*, "Blood we need all of us." *Adash* by the initial letters, of *Attah dam shapaknu*. "Now we have shed blood" and *baakab* by the initial letters of *Beskooto anoo kaiem beolomeka*, "By its merits may we live in thy worlds (the present and the future)," and that the Rabbinites could not refute them?

Answer. It is true that the Frankists—the followers of Jacob Franke, who was the disciple of a successor to that notorious impostor Shabbatai Zebi, the pseudo Messiah—did bring accusations against the Jews, not before the Diet of Poland but before the Bishop of Camenz; but it is not true that they successfully maintained their accusations. And here again I must tax you with wilfully suppressing and perverting the truth, for the same authority whatever it be, which furnished you with the accusation, must equally furnish you with its complete refutation. The Rabbinical Jews could prove, firstly, that these three words were nothing more than mnemonic signs formed by the initials of the ten plagues of Egypt. Secondly, that as there are many words in the Hebrew language beginning with the same initial letters, it was easy to convey by means of these ten letters any sense one might wish to give them. And, lastly, the Rabbinites could prove there was not the slightest support to any such accusation to be found in their books of authority, but that it was opposed by the fundamental rule of the Oral Law.

You stated that the Frankists, as a sect, are suppressed and extinct. This is true, and is of itself a proof that they cannot have made good their accusation: as it is not likely that the righteous and successful accusers should be suppressed, while the guilty and vanquished accused survive and flourish. The fact is, that the Frankists, convicted as slanderers, and found guilty of heresy, at variance alike with the Jewish and Christian faith, were severely punished. Each man had half his hair and beard shaved off as a mark of disgrace, and had to undergo a long and rigorous imprisonment. After their liberation, they outwardly embraced the tenets of the Romish church; their descendants still exist at Warsaw, and intermarry only among themselves, as they are not permitted to enter the Synagogue, and keep aloof from the Church. (Jost's History of the Jews, vol. 8, p. 128.)

Thus, then, are every one of your questions answered; fairly, fully, and in the strictest accordance with truth, before whose Ithuriel touch, the whole fabric you have been at such pains to raise, crumbles into dust. The Jews do not hate the *Goyim*, they do not curse them in their prayers and they have no law which constitutes the murder of any human being a venial offence. They need no human blood to make atonement for their souls, and they do not confess in their passover service, that they require any such abomination. In short, every one of the inferences you seek to deduce from your seven Questions, is destitute of the slightest support from fact or reason, and proved to be false.

After this reply to a writer who presumes to say, "that he wished, though he dared not hope, the Jews might be able to clear themselves," after this refutation at all points, and the utter demolition of his assertions and arguments, I trust we shall hear no more of attacks, which are an insult to the Spirit of the Age, and an outrage on the Sacred cause of Religion.

I now close my letter. Whether you will give me your thanks for my courtesy and good temper, or proclaim me "a pert incompetent fanatic," is to me a matter of perfect indifference. But I deem it my duty to adjure you, if you believe in a God, and a judgment to come, and as you value your own peace of mind, to stand forward manfully and honestly to retract accusations which are proved to be absurd and false; and which, however dangerous they may in former days have been to the Jews, may prove still more dangerous to your own happiness hereafter.

M. J. Raphall
MORRIS J. RAPHALL

17, Millman St. Bedford Row,
 London, 2 Nov. 1840.

APPENDIX I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—In your papers of Saturday and Monday last, you have inserted two communications, the first from Mr. De Castro, President of the Jewish Board of Deputies, to yourself, and the second from Sir Moses Montefiore to the Lord Mayor, relative to the Jews at Damascus. From these communications, it appears that the mission of Sir Moses and M. Crémieux is virtually at an end. These gentlemen have left Alexandria, after soliciting and obtaining from Mehemet Ali a free pardon for their brethren imprisoned at Damascus, and permission for those Jews who had fled from that city, to return and dwell there unmolested. It is unfortunate that circumstances, with which Sir Moses and his coadjutor have nothing to do, should induce them to renounce an investigation so urgently called for by the voice of public opinion throughout the civilised world. It is still more unfortunate, that Messrs. de Castro and Montefiore should boast of the innocence of their rescued co-religionists, while all letters from Syria, recently published, unanimously concur in considering the guilt of the Jews as fully proven. Even the writer in your paper, who signs "An Impartial Observer," who is on the spot, and whose clear, candid, and unbiassed statements entitle him to every attention, reluctantly adopts the conclusion, that the accused are guilty. As Jews, Messrs. Montefiore and Crémieux did wisely, under the circumstances, to accept the pardon which the Pasha was willing to grant. Whether, in so doing, and in renouncing their journey to Damascus, they were at all influenced by the reflection, that an inquiry undertaken at the scene of the crime, while first impressions yet remained in full force, and M. de Ratti Menton was present to watch the proceedings, and vindicate his conduct, might lead to results fatal to their cause, I shall not pretend to decide. But certain it is, that unless these "true Israelites, in whom there is no guile," had met with something to cool their ardour, and quench their zeal, the dread of imaginary dangers at Damascus would hardly deter them from going on with their mission. For be it remembered, that as yet Mehemet Ali's will is law in Syria; his lieutenant, Scheriff Pasha, Governor of Damascus, is firm in his allegiance to the ruler of Egypt; and, to judge from the manner in which the prisoners were received on their release and return to their homes, the respectable Mahometans are favourable to the Jews. And as Sir Moses is the bearer of the Sultan's firman he is certain of safety and protection even should Mehemet Ali be expelled from Syria. Nor can we believe that the Jewish deputies really had anything to fear from the populace; for if Jews who had actually confessed they were the murderers of Father Thomas remain unmolested by the mob, European gentlemen, coming on an errand of justice, and armed with all the authority and protection of Government, would surely run no risk of personal ill-usage. But it seems the high spirit and firm resolve, with which the Jewish deputies entered on their mission, gave way to another feeling, which I will not call regard for public safety, since that was and could be in no real danger, but a calm and prudent view of their case.

I repeat it, as Jews, Messrs. Montefiore and Crémieux have, in all human probability, done wisely; but the civilised world is disappointed. The investigation, so loudly called for, so anxiously expected, is abandoned, and the Jews, if innocent, continue under a load of unmerited suspicion and obloquy; or, if

guilty, persevere in a horrid and highly criminal practice. In either case this state of things must be put an end to. Public opinion is the tribunal which *en première instance* must take cognizance of the matter. Its sentence will decide whether this subject calls for the interference of the Legislature. For if a sufficient case is made out, not only against the Jews of Damascus, but against the professors of modern Judaism in this and every other country, then, to use your own words, "the Jewish religion must at once disappear from the face of the earth."

I say against the professors of modern Judaism in this and in every other country; for their religious tenets are the same in every part of the world. Christian apologists and defenders of the Jews, yourself among the number, have sought to establish a difference between the civilised Jews of Europe and the fanatic sect of Damascus, who, it is said, have oral traditions not known to their European brethren; and these are blamed for making common cause with the Syrian Jews. But these apologists are mistaken. The difference they labour to establish exists nowhere but in their imagination. There are but two sects of Jews—Karaites and Rabbinites. The first, confined to the Crimea and a corner of Poland, and not at all numerous, rejects oral traditions; while the second, which comprises the mass of Jews in every part of the world, not only admits oral tradition, which it holds to be of divine authority, equal to the law of Moses, but obeys the same traditions and the precepts founded thereon, in the same manner everywhere. This is a fact which no Jew will deny; for, like the Papists, they boast of the uniformity which prevails in their creed and observances. They are, therefore, completely identified with the Jews of Damascus, and compelled to make common cause with them; for if these be held to be guilty, the Jews of England, of Europe, cannot be deemed innocent. It is to the Jews of England, therefore, that I address myself, in order to enter on that investigation which in the East has been got rid of. And your widely-spread paper appears to me the best qualified, not only to call public attention to this most important subject, but also to counsel and direct the public mind. My intimate acquaintance with the writings and precepts of the Cabalists and Rabbins enables me to offer important information on the subject; but, as truth is my only object, I sincerely wish, though I dare not hope, that my Jewish fellow-subjects may be able fully to clear themselves.

In your paper of June 25th last, you inserted an extract from a pamphlet written by a Jew who had become a monk, which contained some statements that are true, and many others that are false. You also inserted various other documents relative to the accusation brought against the Jews at Damascus. In reply to this extract, and as their defence to the accusation brought against them, their brethren and co-religionists, the Jews of England, published first an official declaration in which Chief Rabbi Hirschel, on his solemn oath, denied that the Jews in any of their religious rites use human blood; and, secondly, various anonymous letters (inserted in public newspapers) the writers of which all adopt the same line of defence;—viz. the command given by Moses to abstain from all blood, and the rigid manner in which that precept is obeyed by all Jews. Let us examine the real validity of the defence thus set up; and first as regards the oath.

Chief Rabbi Hirschel is, doubtless, an honourable man; but I would ask him—indeed, I would ask all Jews—Is it true, that the solemn service of your most holy festival (the fast of expiation) opens with a prayer or *formula* called "*Col Needra*," which your own Prayer-books render thus:—

"All vows, obligations, oaths, anathemas, whether termed *Konem* or *Keenous*, or otherwise, which we shall have vowed, sworn, devoted, or bound

our souls to, from this day of atonement until the next day of atonement (whose coming we hope for in happiness), we repent, beforehand, of them all, they shall all be deemed absolved, forgiven, annulled, void, and made of no effect: they shall not be binding, nor have any power. The vows shall not be reckoned vows, the obligations shall not be obligatory, nor the oaths considered as oaths."

According to the plain meaning of these words, the Jew, on the very day which he considers the most holy throughout the whole year, solemnly disavows and annuls every oath which he may take during the whole year to come. He declares his oaths and vows of every description to be void, of no value or obligation, and that he does not hold them to be binding on his soul or conscience; and thereby assumes to himself the right and license to take any oath he may think proper, without contracting any responsibility towards God. And he does this prospectively, that his conscience may feel perfectly easy, not only with respect to such oaths as he may already have taken, but also to such as he may find it necessary to take. If such is the impression on his mind—and the precision of language employed in the *Col Needra* leaves no room for any other—of what value is the oath, voluntarily taken by Chief Rabbi Hirschel on this most serious occasion? Of what value, indeed, is the oath of any Jew, on any occasion?

I may be told that this assertion is unjust and illiberal. I sincerely wish it may prove to be so, for I again repeat, truth is my only object. But I ask the Jews, does this formula called "*Col Needra*" form part of your public synagogue service, on the fast of expiation? That it does, is an undeniable fact. The next question is, in what sense is it to be understood? According to the simple and obvious meaning of the words, it relieves the Jew, prospectively, from all religious responsibility on the score of perjury. But if it is not to be understood literally, what is the sense in which Jews understand it, and for what purpose is it introduced in the service of so solemn a day as the fast of expiation? These questions it behoves the Jews to answer. It is their duty satisfactorily to prove, that the "*Col Needra*" does not, in their opinion, confer an unrestricted licence to commit perjury. But until they do this, every unprejudiced man must admit, that an oath taken under such questionable influence as that of the "*Col Needra*," cannot be looked upon as a valid and sufficient defence, to so serious an accusation as that brought against the Jews.

The second line of defence adopted by the Jews of England—viz., the command to abstain from blood, is true in itself, and would be a complete answer to the charge, if the Jews obeyed no other law than that of God, as given to his servant Moses. But the oral law, destroys the force of this commandment; and the oral law is held by the Jews to be of divine authority, equal to the law of Moses. According to Rabbinical law, all the commandments of the law of God are not of equal importance, but some must give way to others, by which they are neutralised or superseded. Thus, according to the Rabbins, the ceremony of circumcision annuls the Sabbath. Not only is it lawful to perform the ceremony on the Sabbath day, but wood may be gathered, a fire kindled, and a sharp instrument prepared on the Sabbath day, if none be at hand wherewith to perform the ceremony. So that the superior importance which the Rabbins ascribe to the rite of circumcision, completely nullifies the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:" and it is a general rule in Rabbinical law, that the lesser commandment must yield to the greater. If, therefore, the use of blood for any religious purpose is indispensable, the precept to abstain from blood is neutralised, and becomes of no import. I

would also remind the Jews, that if blood or any other unclean or prohibited substance, becomes mixed in or with clean or lawful food, in any proportion not greater than as one part of the unclean, to sixty parts of the clean, the lawful food does not, according to Rabbinical law, become unclean or prohibited. From these facts, it becomes clear that the commandment to abstain from blood, on which so much stress is laid by the Jews in their defence, is frittered away into nothing by the traditions and laws of the Rabbins; and, such being the case, the Jews, who advance this precept as a sufficient reply to a most serious accusation, and who must have been aware that they were imposing on the Christian public, did actually offer no defence whatever! or, what is worse, have tried to deceive public opinion, and to mislead it, by setting up a colourable defence, destitute of all truth or real foundation—a subterfuge to which they would not have resorted, had any valid defence remained to them. Such, then, is the real state of the case at present. The Jews are accused of having assassinated a man, in order to use his blood in their religious rites, and that they are in the habit of using human blood obtained by assassination. To refute the accusation, their Rabbins come forward with an oath, which, under the influence of the “*Col Needra*,” is utterly worthless; and their laymen dwell on the commandment to abstain from blood, a commandment of minor importance, liable to be nullified, not only by any other precept supposed to be of greater importance, but even by the desire to make use of a dish of victuals. Let any sane man judge whether such a defence is an answer to such an accusation.

I may, however, be told, that if the defence is null, the accusation is vague—that the accuser is bound to prove that a crime has actually been committed before he can call on the accused for his defence; and that whatever may be the case with the Jews of Damascus, no suspicion can attach to the Jews of England. I grant the fairness of this plea, and am prepared to meet it. The murder of Father Thomaso is laid to the charge of the Jews at Damascus, and all letters recently published concur in declaring the guilt of the Jews as fully proven. I have already shown that the Jews in every part of the world hold the same religious opinions as those of Damascus: and if the guilt of the last mentioned arises from religious motives, such motives are common to all Jews; we have, therefore, only to examine if there is any thing in the customs, laws, and history of the Jews, to warrant the supposition that such motives are probable. For the purpose of such an examination, I ask the Jews:—

1. Is the word *Goi*, and its plural form, *Goiim*, applied by the Jews to all Gentiles, whether Christians, Mahometans, or any other creed?

2. Do the Jews in their passover service make use of the following expressions:—

“O, pour out Thy wrath upon the *Goiim*, who know Thee not; and upon the kingdoms who invoke not Thy name; for they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and cause Thy fierce anger to overtake them: pursue them in wrath, and destroy them from under the heavens of my Lord.”

3. Do the Jews acknowledge the authority of the oral or Rabbinical law?

4. Does that law (Maimonides *Hilkoth Retzeach*, ver. 3), absolve a Jew who murders a *Goi*, even though that *Goi* be a proselyte of the gate, and consequently no idolater, from the punishment of death?

5. Does the law of Moses say, “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”?

6. Do the Jews in their passover services use the words “*dazac*,” “*adash*,” “*baakab*”?

7. It is true, that at a discussion held before the Diet of Poland at Sandomir, in the middle of last century, between Rabbinical Jews and Frankists (a sect of dissenting Jews, since suppressed and extinct), these last-mentioned proved that the word "*dazac*," is formed by the initial letters of the three Hebrew words "*dam*," "*zaraknu*," "*coolanu*"—"Blood we need all of us;" "*adash*" by the initial letters of "*attah*," "*dam*," "*shapaknu*"—"Now we have shed blood;" and "*baakab*" by the initial letters of "*Beskooto anor kaiem beolomeka*"—"By its merit may we live in thy worlds" (the present and the future), and the Rabbinites could not refute them?

If these questions must be answered affirmatively, the following facts are proved:—The Jews hate the *Goiim*, and curse them in their prayers. This hatred is carried to such a degree that the Rabbinical law declares the murder of a *Goi* to be a minor offence, not punishable with death. Such being the law which the Jews obey, and, as in their passover service they confess that they all need blood, which maketh atonement for the soul, there is a sufficient motive why, in accordance with Rabbinical law, they should commit the minor offence to murder a *Goi*, in order to obtain that which they all need, as making atonement for the soul, and which, therefore, is of the highest religious importance.

Such is the conclusion to which any reasonable man must come, if he considers the nature and tendency of the facts resulting from the questions I put to the Jews. It rests with them to refute what I have stated; and I trust that some man of known talent and established reputation will stand forth as the advocate of his brethren. All their anonymous champions have hitherto evaded the true question, which does not refer to the law of Moses, as no believing Christian presumes to impeach its Divine authority, but to the Rabbinical, to which the crime may clearly be traced.

As I am not actuated by any feeling of ill-will towards the Jews, and as truth is my only object, no one can more sincerely rejoice than I shall do if the Jews can clearly and satisfactorily establish their innocence. But if this be not done, it becomes the duty of the legislature to afford this subject its most serious consideration. As long as religious tenets are only speculative, they are entitled to unlimited toleration; but if they incite to crimes—and those crimes repugnant to true religion, as well as to humanity—they must be proscribed; and, as you truly observe, no honorable or honest man can remain a member of such a community.

I am, Sir, your constant reader,

Oxford, Oct. 14.

T. J. C.

II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—My letter in your Tuesday's paper has called forth replies from two Hebrews, Mr. Hananell De Castro, and Dr. Barnard Van Oven. The first, as President of the London Committee of Deputies, limits his answer to the contradicting some of my statements relating to the accused Jews and their liberation; and endeavours to prove that Sir Moses Montefiore and M. Crémieux have not evaded or renounced the investigation at Damascus. But Mr. De Castro omits to explain why Sir Moses and his coadjutor have, for the

present, given up the inquiry. Until this question is satisfactorily answered, all the compliments which Mr. De Castro offers his friend Sir Moses are premature.

Mr. De Castro finds fault with me for stating "that a free pardon was solicited and obtained for the accused;" and refers to the letter of Sir Moses, which asserts that "the discharge was offered as an act of grace, but refused; ultimately it was obtained as a matter of right." It is a well-known fact, published in your paper and never contradicted, that Mehemet Ali, in his firman of liberation, granted the Jews convicted of the murder of Father Thomaso a free pardon, but that M. Crémieux waited on the Pasha, and solicited as a special favour that the word "release" might be substituted for "pardon," which favour the Pasha granted. But, though the phrase may be altered, the fact is not; and, call it by whatever name M. Crémieux pleases, the liberation of the accused Jews, without any inquiry into the cause of their imprisonment, or remark on the conduct of those who seized and tortured them—a liberation granted solely as a concession to the numerous Jews of Europe at the humble prayer of their representatives, Messrs. Montefiore and Crémieux (*vide* Mehemet Ali's firman in your paper)—such a liberation is an act of grace and pardon, and nothing else.

To contradict my statement that letters recently published from Syria concur in considering the guilt of the Jews as fully proven, Mr. de Castro refers to a letter from M. Merlato, Austrian Vice-Consul at Damascus, who calls the liberation of the Jews "the triumph of innocence over oppression." I will not dwell on the fact that throughout the whole of this affair, M. Merlato has been considered as a partisan of the Jews, and the purity of his motives more than suspected; but I will content myself with remarking, that M. Merlato's opinion seems to rest on his feelings only, whereas your correspondents (especially "An Impartial Observer") judge from the minute and accurate manner in which the separate confessions of the accused agree and corroborate each other; so that it is easy to decide on the merits of these conflicting opinions.

Mr. de Castro declares, "he shall nullify the assertion, that the mission is virtually at an end, by an extract from Sir Moses Montefiore's last letter," which states, that the honourable knight intends to proceed to Constantinople, to "make arrangements which will, at some future period, facilitate an inquiry which he still thinks it needful to make." A searching inquiry as to the accusation brought against the Jewish religion was the avowed and principal object of the mission undertaken by Sir Moses and M. Crémieux. The release of the accused was a subordinate consideration, and a natural result of their being found innocent. Sir Moses has not yet done anything with respect to the inquiry, which therefore continues to be the chief purpose of his mission, the importance of which is nowise abated. But he speaks of it as a something which he still thinks it needful to make at some future period. Such lukewarm sentiments and vague expressions, instead of nullifying, fully confirm the assertion, that "the mission is virtually at an end."

After these remarks, it becomes evident that Mr. De Castro has failed in his attempt to refute my statements; that, therefore, as far as he is concerned, the question remains in full force. I take leave of him, with thanks for the courtesy and good temper which prevail throughout his letter, and which alone are becoming in the discussion of matters so important and serious. He will, however, permit me to observe, that he is mistaken in thinking that this is a religious discussion, and that, therefore, the columns of a newspaper are not the fittest place for it. A serious charge, founded on facts, published in the newspapers of every country, has been brought against the Jews. General

attention has been excited, and nothing but full publicity given to every portion of the inquiry and arguments, can set the question at rest. For this purpose, no medium is so well adapted as the columns of a public journal, high in general estimation, unprejudiced, and incorruptible; and it is only by availing themselves of that medium, to give the utmost publicity to their defence, that the Jews can clear themselves in the eyes of the Christian world.

With this remark, I quit Mr. De Castro, and proceed to offer some comments on the letter of Dr. Van Oven, which professes to answer my leading observations. After admitting the truth of my statement, that all Rabbinical Jews are guided by the same laws and traditions, Dr. Van Oven seeks to explain the "*Col Needra*," by restricting its meaning to vows or oaths, thoughtlessly or impiously made, "such as are referred to in Leviticus and Numbers." This explanation, he tells you, I should have found, had I been candid enough to read the page preceding the "*Col Needra*" in the Jewish prayer-book. But he himself, is not candid enough to add, that while the "*Col Needra*" forms a most solemn portion of the synagogue service, and is to be "three times repeated in a solemn and tremulous voice," the page which precedes it, and to which he refers me, does not at all form an integral part of the synagogue service. In fact, it contains nothing but a lame and unsatisfactory note by the translator, who tries to soften down the startling and offensive import of the "*Col Needra*," by restricting its meaning to the cases mentioned in your correspondent's letter. But there is no book of authority amongst the Jews, which adopts this explanation; and the Governments of Wurtemberg, Saxe Weimar, and other states in Germany, to whom it was offered, as a defence for the "*Col Needra*," were so little satisfied, that in their dominions, they have caused this objectionable and immoral formula to be expunged from the synagogue service. Doubtless, Jews are men of honour and conscience as well as others, but certainly not because Rabbinism fosters honour or conscience; I therefore again repeat, the oath of a Jew, whose mind is under the influence of the "*Col Needra*," is of no value whatever, and nothing that Dr. Van Oven has advanced on the subject, can in any degree controvert this fact.

The learned Doctor next proceeds to reply to some of the questions I put in my letter. With respect to my first question, he asserts that the word "*Goi*" or "*Goiim*" is stated by Maimonides "to be applicable only to those nations who inhabited Canaan, and whom the Lord commanded the Jews to extirpate and destroy." Indeed! Perhaps Dr. Van Oven will have the goodness to state in which edition of Maimonides' works, what chapter and page, that astute Rabbini is so inconsistent as to make that statement? Until the Doctor favours us with this information, he must pardon me if I declare, that, to the best of my knowledge, not one word of the kind is to be found in any of Maimonides' writings: and the every-day practice of Jews, even in this country, unhesitatingly applies the word *Goi* to their Christian neighbours. This is a fact which no honest Jew would attempt to deny.

In reply to my second question, Dr. Van Oven admits that the quotation from the Passover service is "harsh and intolerant; but it refers only to the heathen, the Hebrew words being, 'who do not know thee,' and cannot, therefore, have any reference to either Christians or Mahometans, both of whom worship the same Almighty God as the Jews do," &c. Indeed! Perhaps Dr. Van Oven will have the goodness to state what is his Rabbinical authority for making that assertion? Lest he should be tempted again to quote Maimonides, I beg to inform him, that famous Rabbini mentions both Christians and Mahometans by name among those "who have no portion in the blessings of a future state" (*Helkot Teshoobah* iii. 8), because they do not know God.

Therefore, until the Doctor affords us the required information, he will permit me to tell him, that although most creditable to his own individual feelings of humanity and tolerance, his assertion, so far from being supported by any Rabbinical authority, is actually in the teeth of them all.

Your learned Hebrew correspondent, passing four of my questions (most important ones) without any notice or reply whatever, fastens on the last, to tell me, that in quoting the three words *Dazac, Adash, Baakab*, I "fall into a strange error," &c. But surely he falls into an error far more strange, if he does not see that the interpretation given to these three words is not mine, but that of a Jewish sect, the Frankists, and was successfully maintained by them, before the Diet of Poland, in a public discussion with Rabbinical Jews. This is an historical fact, and unless Dr. Van Oven can disprove that fact, all his declamations on the subject are utterly worthless.

Dr. Van Oven calls upon me to produce any Jewish book which enjoins the shedding of human blood, and he goes on to state, that "all the religious observances of the Jews are to be found minutely described in the Bible, the Mishna, and the Talmud." It is irksome to contend with an opponent, every one of whose assertions proves either that he is profoundly ignorant of his subject, or that he is guilty of wilful misrepresentations. The greater part of the observances of modern Judaism are not known to the Bible. The Talmud (of which the Mishna forms a part) does not contain all the observances; there is not any one work which does. In addition to the Bible and Talmud, the *Shoolham Arook*, the *Yahd Hasakka*, and a countless number of *Teshooobot* must be consulted, before anything like a knowledge of the customs and observances of the Jews can be acquired; and where is the Gentile to be found who is acquainted with them all, and with every book that may contain a portion of them?

I have now noticed the substance of Dr. Van Oven's replies, and appeal to every unbiassed reader, be he Jew or Gentile, to decide between us. Were I really what the Dr. charges me with being, "a slanderer," "who attempts to injure and oppress the Jews," I would hail with satisfaction a repetition of letters such as that with which he has favoured the public. But as I am not a slanderer, and wish not to injure or oppress Israel, but solely to promote the cause of truth, I would advise those Jews whose zeal, outrunning their discretion, may urge them to take a part in this discussion, though they must confess their ignorance of Rabbinical law, and consequently of the subject at issue—I would advise them to pause before they inflict further injury on the cause they wish to serve by publishing letters destitute alike of temper, talent, and truth. It is not ignorant zeal, boyish petulance, or flippant misrepresentations that can produce any good result in a question which strongly interests the civilized world; nor can they furnish becoming replies to a letter to which a journal like "The Times" invites the attention of its readers. But the same good feeling towards the Jews which induces me to offer this advice to pert and incompetent zealots, also prompts me strongly to urge Jews of talent and learning to stand forth as the advocates of their brethren; for, notwithstanding Mr. de Castro's aversion to newspaper discussions, the Jews and their Committee of Deputies may rest assured, that the spirit of the age will not permit them to evade inquiry by contemptuous silence, and that public opinion cannot be defied with impunity.

I am, Sir, your constant reader,

T. J. C.

Oxford, Oct. 24, 1840.

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